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Legislation banning illegal use of traffic-signal controllers sent to governor

Lansing – The possession, purchase or use of traffic signal controllers would result in fines and possible jail time under legislation sent to the governor today.

Sponsored by Sens. Tony Stamas, R-Midland, and Jud Gilbert, R-Algonac, the legislation is designed to limit the use of all signal preemption devices such as Mobile Infrared Transmitters to emergency personnel only.

“Only trained emergency personnel should have access to these devices,” Stamas said. “I’m glad my colleagues in the House and Senate agreed to send this important legislation to the governor, making our roads safer for pedestrians and motorists.”

The devices emit a signal to receivers installed at intersections and, when within a 1,500-foot range, change the light immediately from red to green, allowing emergency vehicles to more easily pass through the intersection.

Since the devices operate on infrared signals, they do not emit radio signals like radar jammers and certain laser detectors. Therefore, they do not violate Federal Communications Commission guidelines.

Michigan is leading the way in making the devices illegal to own and operate. Other states, including Indiana and Ohio, also are considering similar legislation. Additionally, a bill has been introduced in the U.S. Congress.

Under the legislation, penalties include:

(More)

- A misdemeanor charge with up to 90 days in jail and a fine of \$5,000 for the unlawful possession of a signal preemption device;
- A felony charge punishable by imprisonment of up to two years and a fine of \$10,000 for the unlawful sale or purchase of a signal preemption device; and
- Felony charges punishable by imprisonment of up to five years and a fine of \$15,000 for individuals using a signal preemption device resulting in a traffic crash. If the use of a signal preemption device results in death, the penalty is a felony charge punishable by up to 15 years imprisonment and a fine of \$25,000.

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